

Garden Clippings

Orange County Master Gardeners' Newsletter

Volume 11 Number 4

April 2005

April Meeting

Saturday, April 2, 2005

510 E. Memory Lane, Santa Ana

Schedule

8:30 – 9:00 a.m.	Setup Plants 'n Things
9:00 – 9:30 a.m.	Snacks and Socializing
9:30 a.m.	General Meeting
10:00 a.m.	Enrichment Program

Members with last names starting with R - Z, please bring a breakfast snack. Other members are also welcome to bring goodies

Please bring along any items you wish to contribute to our Plants 'n Things raffle, seed catalogs you would like to share and holiday cards for Rita.

Enrichment Workshop:--Japanese Maples

What fascinated me the most on my first trip to Portland one spring was not the extravaganza of blooming rhododendrons, but the multi-hued lacy foliage of the small Japanese maples. I lusted to have one in my own garden. Fred Snyder knows the secrets of how to make these exquisite trees thrive in our southern California climate. He'll share his tips and showcase some of his specimens at the meeting. Due to construction, we will have to delay a field trip to his home for another date (lucky us, who had the opportunity to see them at last year's garden tour!).

Board Meeting: April. 18 at home of Phil Loew

Special Event: The Environmental Nature Center's Butterfly House grand opening is April 17 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Some butterfly-friendly

plants will be for sale. The ENC is at 1601 Sixteenth Street in Newport Beach.

Gardening Events

Fullerton Arboretum. Pre-register for all classes by calling 714/278-3579 ext. 0.

April 2: Gardening Gourmet II with Diane Wilkinson, 10:00-11:30 a.m., Oak Hall Classroom \$15/person.

Tour gardens to taste what is growing and learn to cook seasonally. Shared ideas and recipes.

April 9: Orchids in Your Garden with Roberta Fox and Tony Glinskas, 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., Bleachers \$7/person

Fox and Glinskas, Co-Chairs of The Fascination of Orchids International Show, the largest orchid show in the country, will take you through the basics of orchid selection and care.

April 16: Salvias!

10:00-11:00 a.m., Bleachers \$7/person

Explore some of the 900 species of Sages world wide and take a few home to your garden.

April 23-24: Green Scene Plant Sale and Garden Accessory

Largest outdoor plant sale in California; over 100 selling vendors are expected. Hours are 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on April 23 and 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on April 24. Cost \$6.00 for adults; children under 12 free. Special "Members Only" preview on April 23 from 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. Arboretum members free..

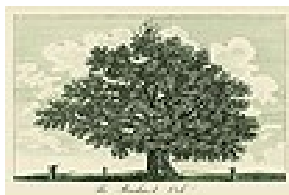
Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden

Register for classes: 909/625-8767 or download registration from <http://www.rsabg.org>:

April 2: Annual Spring Plant Sale

10:00 am – 2:00 pm. (attend AFTER OCMG meeting!)

Leaves from the President



Spring is here and before you read this column, walk around your garden and enjoy all that is beginning to grow and bloom. If you have some time (you don't have to go far), go see the beautiful wildflowers that have been blooming for the last month before it's all over. We went to the Antelope Valley Poppy Reserve a few weekends ago and the flowers were breathtaking. Theodore Payne has a wildflower hotline that will keep you updated on the local areas 818/768-3533.

This year we need members to fill these valuable board positions: President, First Vice President (in charge of volunteer venues), Second Vice President (in charge of the training class), and Corresponding Secretary. If you are interested, please contact me as soon as possible.

Watch for next month's Garden Clippings for our May 7 garden tour information and directions. We have some interesting gardens to visit.

Happy Gardening! --Sharon Neely

Congratulations, new Master Gardeners!

The following students not only have graduated, but have completed their first 50 volunteer hours. Awesome job!

Barbara Eaves: 81.5 hours
Diane Gipson: 55.5 hours
Dorothee Kohlmeier: 61.5 hours
Jeannine Lawrie: 54.0 hours
Ro Meadows: 56.5 hours
Teri Sweeney: 67.0 hours
Joe Underwood: 71.0 hours
Heather Waxham: 73.0 hours
Helen Wood: 75.0 hours

☎ Contacts

Sharon Neely, *President*.....
Cindy Polera Burch, *1st Vice Pres*
Helen Elich, *2nd Vice Pres*...
Phil Loew, *Treasurer*.....
Fred Snyder, *Plant Clinic*.....
Jill Patterson, *Newsletter Editor*
Submit articles by the 10th of each month
Jackie Brooks, *Vol. Hours*

OCMG Website: <http://www.ocmastergardeners.org>

More on Sedums From Cynthia:

In addition to my own plant production, a good source for Sempervivums & Sedums is www.squawmountaingardens.com. There are great photographs of the varieties, however the plants are shipped bareroot and it will take a full year before the plants are the size that I sell. The business is great to deal with.

My top 7 list for topiary work:

1. Sempervivum arachnoidium 'Cebenese'
2. Sempervivum 'Pekinese'
3. Sempervivum ciliosum borisii
4. Sedum dasyphyllum
5. Sedum album var. micranthum sub.var. chloroticum also
6. Sempervivum 'Maryente' A super grower for larger work (has mahogany tones)
7. Sempervivum 'Beautiful' Looks great with borisii, however a little trickier to grow.

Accent Sedums:

Sedum oxoacanthum
Sedum x 'Little Gem'

Small cassulas may be used as well, however many have large woody root systems that will out run the alpines.

It takes a few years to see how each new variety will grow in our climate and I am always mixing in new varieties. The above are, consistently, the best performers.

Contact Cynthia at the below address if you would like to purchase any plants:

Cynthia R. Covert - P.O. Box 6517 - Corona, CA 92878-6517. email: ccover@copper.net

An excellent book on Sedums (available at Orange County Public Library) is: *Sedum: Cultivated Stonecrops* by Ray Stephenson. Timber Press, 1993.

Another book, written by the Grand Dame of sempervivums in this country and unfortunately out of print (but available from used book dealers—check amazon.com), is *Plant Jewels of the High Country: sempervivums and sedums* by Helen Payne, published in 1974 by Pine Cone Publishers. According to Cynthia, Helen Payne created many hybrid varieties & selections.

Cynthia heard that when customers came to purchase plants at her nursery, she would lift the rosettes from nursery flats with old table forks.

And more on Bamboo:

The American Bamboo Society, Southern California Chapter, will be selling bamboo on the Saturday, April 16, at the Quail Botanic Garden in Encinitas located at 230 Quail Gardens Drive. Admission to the garden is \$8 and includes admission to the sale.



Bambusa tuldoidea 'Ventricosa'
"Buddha's Bellv Bamboo"

Sale Preview: 9:00-10:30 a.m. Over 100 species grown by collectors and local growers.

Auction: Rare bamboo 10:30 a.m. Special items propagated from the reference collection. Most items not yet commercially available.

Plant Sale and Bamboo Crafts and Products Sale : 11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. Come early for best selection! Poles, art, supplies and more

Volunteer Opportunities

The Donna O'Neill Land Conservancy in San Juan Capistrano is a 1200-acre wilderness

reserve located on the historic Rancho Mission Viejo in southern Orange County, California. The plant communities and habitats are representative of the Southern California landscape as it appeared before the Spanish settlers arrived more than two centuries ago. **CONTACT:** Laura Cohen at 949-489-9778; www.TheConservancy.org

Biology Research Day

Help with real research projects on The Conservancy the last Saturday of every month. Everyone welcome. Please call for reservations and further information. **Date:** April 30
Time: 1 - 5:00 pm

Seed Collection

The bunch grasses will soon go to seed, and help is needed to collect some for future revegetation, contact Laura for dates.

April 14-17: South Coast Garden Show.

Thurs. - Sat 10 a.m. to 9 p.m., Sun 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Contact Sharon Neely to help at this event. This is a terrific opportunity for everyone to earn volunteer hours, especially our new members. We generally hand out information about our organization and answer some gardening questions. A special plus is visiting the many vendors exhibiting; most of these will not be at Green Scene.

Arbolita School Garden

Arbolita School in La Habra is in need of expert assistance with its garden plot. Principal Teresa Egan assures us she has parents who are willing to help and she is willing and able to provide all that is needed in the way of materials to support the garden.

Arbolita School, 1001 Brookdale, is a K-2 school located in the northeast portion of the city, north of Whittier Blvd., west of Harbor.

For further information please contact Mary Haller, 714-526-1805 or damemarytea@earthlink.net

Jan Youngquist presents:

Recipes are not normally included, but Jan's contributions to the December potluck were so scrumptious that we couldn't resist. Thanks for sharing, Jan!

CRÈME BRULÉE FRENCH TOAST

- 8 eggs beaten
- 2 cups heavy whipping cream
- 2 cups whole milk
- ¾ cup brown sugar
- 2 tsp. Vanilla
- 8 Croissants, cut in half

Generously butter a 9 x 13 Pyrex pan. Mix together first 5 ingredients.

Layer the croissants into the buttered pan and pour egg and cream mixture over the top. Cover and refrigerate overnight.

Preheat oven to 375°

Bake uncovered for 45 minutes to 1 hour in a bain marie (hot water bath). Test by inserting a knife in the center. Serve with lots of butter, warm maple syrup, fresh berries and a sprinkling of powdered sugar.

BACON WRAPPED DATES

preheat oven to 400°

- 1 (8 ounce) package pitted dates
- 1 pound bacon (apple-smoked bacon from Trader Joes)
- 1 pack round toothpicks
- 1 7 x 11 Pyrex baking dish

Cut entire package of bacon in half. Remove some toothpicks from box. Roll bacon around date and skewer with toothpick. Place in dish. Bake uncovered at 400° until well browned.

You can also stuff dates with almonds and/or cheddar cheese if you wish.

Get well wishes to: Helen Elich, who hurt her back while volunteering at ENC.

Electronic connections:

Jackie Brooks found a website which lists retail outlets for “native and California friendly plants” by county: www.bewaterwise.com Click on “garden resources”, then “resources” (last bullet point in the box), then find and click under “native plant suppliers”. Lots of other information on this site about native gardens.

Online Planting guide: This U.C. Common Ground Garden Program in Los Angeles site provides tips on what to plant each month, IPM, information on composting and fertilizing, and answers other general gardening questions: <http://celosangeles.ucdavis.edu/garden/tips/index.html>

Debris From the Editor

The rain gods didn't notice that I had a Thursday off work and I was FINALLY able to plant my roses!!! During my first opportunity in weeks to actually go out in the yard, I noticed how many other chores are crying for attention: weeding, pruning, trimming—all exacerbated by our unprecedented-in-over-100-years rainfall. I still have tomatoes and peppers to plant, but was interrupted on Friday by our latest onslaught of wet weather. I've also taken the plunge and bought 2 blueberry plants. They will remain in self-watering pots and I have high hopes for a huge harvest. My hopes are really high, because I could have bought gallons of blueberries for what I have already spent on plants, pots, and soil!

Elections are coming up and it is your turn to volunteer for a Board position. Volunteers must have completed their 50 hours and be able to attend a monthly Board meeting in addition to fulfilling the requirements of the particular position. I urge our new members who have just completed their hours to consider being on the Board. The rewards are many! My thanks to our current Board, and especially our President, who have done such an excellent job. You are appreciated!

Fruit Facts

STRAWBERRY TREE – *Arbutus unedo* – Ericaceae

Donated by: CRFG/Clarence Barker and
planted in 1980 (r.f.-09)

Common names: Strawberry tree, Madroño,
Albocera, Albedro, Ichigoki, Ervedro,
Medronheiro.

The name *Arbutus unedo* derives from the Latin “arbor” that means “small tree” and “unus” – “edo,” that means “one” – “alone”. The name was given to remind you that you should “eat only one fruit,” because it contains alcohol and gives you headaches.

The strawberry tree is a small tree reaching 15 feet in height. The trunk bark is grayish-red, becoming redder as the tree becomes older. The bark is very thin with longitudinal fissures, which in time separates from the trunk. The top of the tree is round with thick branches having the same characteristics as the trunk bark. The leaves are simple, alternate, and remain in the tree during the year.

The strawberry tree produces masses of white-yellowish flowers at the ends of the branches. Since the fruit takes 12 months to ripen, the tree carries both mature fruit and flowers at the same time, making the tree incredibly beautiful.



The fruit varies in size, though it averages about 1 inch in diameter is red in color and from the distance looks like strawberries. Even though

the fruit resembles a strawberry, the taste is sweet but insipid. The skin is somewhat rough, but when ripe, the fruit itself has the texture of a lush tropical fruit and has pleasant flavor.



The strawberry tree seems to be indifferent to the type of soil, but it seems to have a preference for acid soils. The tree tolerates most soils but prefers good drained soils. The tree will grow in sun or part shade and should be fertilized in spring. Pruning should be to thin with emphasis to show the beauty of the twisted branches and the reddish brown bark.

The strawberry tree is easily propagated from seeds. Seeds germinate well in the middle or late spring. The seedlings are rather small and slow-growing. They are prone to damp off, and so they must be kept in well-ventilated lightly shaded areas. Transplant them as soon as they are large enough to handle and grow them for at least the first winter under a light shade. Plant the seedlings in their permanent positions when they are 12 inches tall.

It is possible to propagate the tree from cuttings. Use mature, 12 inches, scions from current season growth. They are a bit slow to root and you get a poor percentage take. If there are some branches low enough, it is possible to produce plants from layering but it can take up to 2 years to produce roots.

—*Alfredo Chiri, OC Calif. Rare Fruit Growers liaison to the Fullerton Arboretum.*